

IHC-MM-110  
23 October 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Comments on Project ANSRS Test and Evaluation Report  
of 15 August 1969.

1. After reading the subject report my opinion is that the test was premature and the findings were inconclusive. The word "inconclusive" is used several times in describing aspects of the test in the report itself. The general Test & Evaluation (T & E) committee conclusion was that "the ANSRS T & E was not uniformly conclusive in determining the relative utility and effectiveness of the initial applications selected for ANSRS". (p. 39) I think that the results were certainly not conclusive enough to justify the first recommendation made (p. 41): that the system be declared operational. At best I don't think the T & E clearly demonstrated fulfillment of the System objective: applicability of time sharing to intelligence ADP. Making it operational probably means they're permanently saddled with a system whose utility is only half-tested and not half proven.

2. The first note that caught my eye was that nowhere is the identity of the test team mentioned. Their identity is known to the staff but the uninformed would not be aware of what biases they may have.

3. Secondly, the conclusions drawn seem based on a rather small sampling. Of 182 analysts authorized to use the system, only 69 did, and of these only 35 answered the questionnaire -- only 19% of possible users. There were eleven teletypes and eight CRTs

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available to elements of three DIA directorates, but they were only utilized an average of one hour and 52 minutes a day. This lack of utilization was explained by the largest group of users (who answered the questionnaire) as due to poor training (p. 87). If so, it would seem like an accelerated training program or a delay in the T & E would have made for a better test.

4. The chief complaint against the system was down-time (p. 86). The system barely met GSA standards (90%) for a 24 hour day, and fell below 90% for the time sharing period. Actually the individual directorate reports are less comforting than the T & E Committee's conclusions. DIAAP said the system was available 84% of the time, which did not take into account defective or "down" consoles -- all of which "had a deleterious impact on the confidence the user places in ANSRS" (p. 50). DIACO mentioned the frustrations of users using the system when it would go "down" -- and it was only available 76% of the time to them. "This irritating problem created a negative attitude in many users -- which in many cases still persists even though down time is less and less frequent". (p. 58). DIACO's CRT was "ineffective ever since it was installed" (p. 56), though the committee report said the terminals were 98 per cent reliable January-June 1969. (p. 31).

5. The committee report gave ANSRS a clean bill of health on security, but ANSRS did not really face up to the big security problem -- multi-level security -- though an attack on this problem is a committee recommendation. (pp. 38 & 41). The directorate complaint about terminals being unhandy (p. 58) was probably because

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of the overall SI classification hung on the system.

6. Another sign of premature haste in conducting the T & E seemed to be that only three of the 17 data bases were ever functionally operational i. e. contained up-to-date and validated data (p. 39). It would seem that many of the software applications and data bases were not yet ready for testing. Certainly, DIACO's recommendation is appropriate, i. e., that in light of the difficulties encountered in conducting the test another T & E be conducted in approximately six months.

7. There were also many unanswered questions in the ANSRS software. The committee report pointed out one oddity: that while in most time-sharing systems the rule is that the hardware is more reliable than the software, in ANSRS the reverse was true. (p. 28). However, it also pointed that they found it impossible to make an objective evaluation of the software, because (1) very few statistics exist which could assist in a technical evaluation of the System software as a self-contained entity, and (2) there exist no generally accepted software performance benchmarks (p. 27). Nevertheless, there were many software capabilities in various stages of implementation at the time of the T & E. Perhaps a later test could find some better way of judging the software.

8. The last question to be asked would be what application the ANSRS T & E would have to COINS. It seems to me that a close reading of the ANSRS T & E would support the following points.

1) All files must be operational and the system "up"

more than 90% of the time to conduct a meaningful

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The Directorate reports made it clear that too many novice users got discouraged and quit using the system after their first attempts got no answers.

- 2) Files must be appropriate for the type of system and the type of user.

The committee report noted that some of the files selected would have been more appropriate on remote batch; several of the directorates complained that the terminals were too slow for the lengthy answers the files provided.

- 3) Large numbers of cooperative users must be trained, otherwise there will be too small a sampling for a good evaluation.

The directorate reports seem to indicate that many analysts thought ANSRS was some sort of idiotic toy, and preferred readily available and familiar manual systems that provided the same information.

- 4) What the evaluation can and should discover must be clear; this requires:
  - (quantified, if possible)
  - a) good, limited, clearly defined objectives, and
  - b) a clear evaluation plan tailored to those objectives.

9. The COINS management is aware of most of these points, and has tried to cover them, but it seems to me that the present T & E

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period for COINS will result in a very similar report because of a variety of factors, many of which are outside their control.

10. Lastly, ANSRS made no attempt at Cost/Benefit Analysis of the system, chiefly because they found it difficult to quantify the benefits--this is nearly always the case in intelligence. In my opinion, this is a mistake. It merely postpones and beclouds the question which the senior manager is going to have to face eventually, "Is it worth the cost?" In the past managers have sometimes evaded the decision by looking at the system's good points and keeping it in some sort of permanent developmental status, which means we pay manufacturers for systems which don't really answer our requirements. *The evaluation reports that* ~~what~~ ANSRS provides DIA is speed, or currency of information (which is another way of saying speed) (p. 86). What is that speed worth to the operating manager, \$10,000 a year? \$100,000 a year? ten TO slots? Nothing? The present generation of managers should ask these questions first, so a T & E best face up to them as soon as possible.

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IHC Support Staff

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